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ABSTRACT

Compared for sex differences were the attitudes towards affective and cognitive instructional goals of 11 male and 19 female teachers of the trainable mentally retarded. The Preferred Student Characteristic Scale (PSCS) was administered to the Ss. No sex differences in the teachers' attitudes were found. The results were compared with previous studies using the PSCS with teachers of the visually handicapped and of the educable mentally retarded. (DB)

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A STUDY OF SEX DIFFERENCES IN THE ATTITUDES OF MALE AND FEMALE TEACHERS OF THE TMR

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A STUDY OF SEX DIFFERENCES IN THE ATTITUDES OF MALE AND FEMALE TEACHERS OF THE TMR

The study of attitudes of special class teachers of exceptional children toward specific instructional goals orientation, i.e. cognitive and academic achievement versus affective or emotional adjustment is just beginning to draw the attention of researchers in special education. Some related studies include the study of crippled children (Noel, 1966) the educable mentally retarded (Fine, 1967; and Schmidt and Nelson, 1969) and the visually handicapped (Schmidt and Nelson, 1968). No studies were found comparing teachers of the trainable mentally retarded on the above attitudinal dimension.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study was to compare the attitudes of male and female teachers of the trainable mentally retarded to determine if they shared the same affective/cognitive dimension toward instructional goals. The null hypothesis that no significant difference between the males and females would be tested.

METHOD & PROCEDURE

Subjects: The Ss were selected from four school districts in Southern California having educational programs for the trainable mentally retarded. The sample in this study was comprised of 30 teachers (19 female and 11 male) of the TMR. The range of teaching level extended from elementary level programs through secondary.

Instrument: The criterion instrument for measuring teacher attitudes was the Preferred Student Characteristic Scale that was developed by Nelson (1964). This scale contains 36 paired forced choice items. The response for each item is scored either affective or cognitive. Nelson states that the cognitive teacher is concerned with the intellectual, abstract, subject-matter goals of teaching, whereas the affective teacher is concerned with emotional adjustment and student interaction. The maximum possible score on the PSCS is thirty-six and the low is zero, with the midpoint between cognitive and affective dimensions at eighteen. For the purpose of this study the scoring will utilize the above as advocated by Nelson and Schmdit (1968, 1969) and in another manner reported by Lazar, Orpet, and Fogg (1971) that divided the scoring into three dimensions, affective, affective/cognitive, and cognitive.

Administration: The first two investigators shared in the administering the PSCS at the school sites of the subjects as individual test in a quite location. Generally appointments were scheduled, and in the case of two schools several teachers took the test as a group. It was felt that while this was a slight change in procedure, there would be no influence on the results in that no discussion was allowed prior to and during the taking of the test. No names of Ss was recorded nor school, only the sex, as agreed to by the investigators and the districts involved.

RESULTS

A t-test was utilized to determine if there was a significant difference between the two sample means. Table 1 provides data concerning sample size, PSCS mean scores by sex, and standard deviations, and the results of a simple t-test. There was no significant difference between the two sample means. If the scoring technique of Nelson and Schmidt (1968, 1969) is used, one can state that the males tend toward the ~~high~~ lower level of the affective range, while the females tend to situate on the lower level of the cognitive dimension. In contrast, the scoring method by Lazar, Orpet, and Fogg (1971) would indicate that both groups are really affective/cognitive, with only a few individuals at the two extremes. Table 2 indicates such a distribution along the three dimensional grouping with a comparison with the results of Lazar, Orpet, and Fogg (1971). The present investigators would support and recommend usage of the three dimensional scoring technique as more realistic and a hedge against the regression toward the mean phenomena associated with many scales.

DISCUSSION

The finding of no sex difference between teachers of the trainable mentally retarded in this study is in agreement with the Schmidt and Nelson (1969) study of educable mentally retarded teachers because they found no sex difference in mean scores while using the PSCS as their criterion instrument. Schmidt and Nelson (1968) did not find a sex difference between male and female teachers of the visually handicapped either. It is interesting to note that they did find that the teachers of

the visually handicapped had a group mean of 23.4 on the PSCS in contrast to their other study involving teachers of the educable mentally retarded who had a group mean of 13.8. One explanation that they offer concerning this difference is that the teachers of the visually handicapped do not perceive the disability as necessarily associated with intellectual or achievement retardation. They do caution the reader about this explanation, with which the present authors would agree. In contrast, the total group mean for the present TMR teachers was 17.5. Thus, one can only conclude that the EMR teachers drift more toward the affective while the teachers of the visually handicapped drift more toward the cognitive when compared to the mean score of the TMR group.

In a study of 100 males and 100 females attending a summer session at a Southern California university, Lazar, Orpet, and Fogg (1971) found more students of both sex groups to fall within the cognitive dimension in contrast to the affective. Yet, even in this study, the bulk of the student scores fell into what they called the affective/cognitive dimension. The data of this study is indicated in Table 2. It should be noted again, that this study and the Schmidt and Nelson (1968, 1969) studies used special class teachers as their subjects, whereas the Lazar, Orpet, & Fogg (1971) study utilized a sample of university students in some educational psychology classes.

It is difficult to generalize from this study and some of the others cited using special education teachers because of the small sample sizes. What would be appropriate would be to recommend further

studies using larger samples of special teachers, and with other instruments in addition to the PSCS so that some correlational studies might be conducted. One might conclude that one reason there was no sex difference between the male and female teachers of the TMR is that there might be a selective factor in operation as to the kind of person that is drawn into the field. Still another factor, and somewhat related to selectivity, would be the impact of training programs that TMR teachers are exposed to during their initial college training. In both instances, these reasons are based upon logical arguments and no research data per se.

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TABLE 1

N, PSCS Means, and Standard Deviations

	N	PSCS Mean	s.d.	t	
Male	11	15.55	6.83	1.51	n.s.
Female	19	18.78	4.51		

TABLE 2

COMPARISON OF TWO STUDIES
ON THREE DIMENSIONS

STUDY	AFFECTIVE PSCS 0-12 N	AFFECTIVE/COGNITIVE PSCS 13-24 N	COGNITIVE PSCS 25-36 N	TOTAL
Lazar, Orpet & Fogg, 1971				
Male	16	48	36	= 100
Female	16	61	23	= 100
This Study				
Male	4	6	1	= 11
Female	1	16	2	= 19